

WHOOPS! AND CO. PAPER IMPRESSIONS

In 1993, Linda Stuesser's friend and neighbor asked her if she would like to work with her to open a toy store called "Whoops!" She knew of Linda's interest in starting her own business and offered this as a way for her to "get her feet wet" in owning a business. Linda accepted the offer and Whoops! and Co. was opened on Mineral Point Road in Madison. In 1996, after three successful years, Linda bought the business from her friend.



With the purchase of the business, part of Linda's goal had been achieved – she had her own business but it was not quite the one she had planned. Linda started to move her store more in the direction of arts and crafts with the tag line "for the creative child in all of us." To this end, two years later, she expanded her store to include crafts specifically for adults and focused on the newest emerging crafts field of paper arts, rubber-stamping and scrap booking.

The original store, Whoops! and Co. sells "toys". It is not exclusively a kids' store. They sell brainteasers, magic tricks, kites, and other outdoor family-type active and skill toys, traditional and classic board games, origami supplies, craft kits, and the list goes on. Whoops! is really for the kid and the creative one in all of us. It is "toys and gifts for all ages."

The other half of the store is Paper Impressions that carries all supplies for creative paper arts. They believe that the creative child who grows up with quality toys from Whoops! and Co. will become the creative adult who will frequent a store like Paper Impressions.

It is designed to bring out your creative side. Specializing in all of the supplies you need for creative paper arts projects. Specialty papers, a large selection of art stamps, embossing stencils, tools, embellishments, idea books and loads of samples to browse for inspiration. They also feature a full assortment of card stock and envelopes for card making and special occasion invitations. The two stores in one, located side-by-side are now located at 2831 W. Beltline Highway in Middleton, Wisconsin and has 10 employees.

Linda offer's classes for children and adults, and holds birthday parties and summer crafts camps. Two employees are specialists in planning and creating wedding invitations, programs and the related items that go along with this special occasion. Programs and invitations for graduations, family reunions, memorial services, and more also "fit the bill."

Linda's career before opening her own business was in education along with time spent as a full-time mom. Her college degrees are in education and textile design. Linda's long-term goal was to own her own business, one related to "practical" art for daily living. Her interest is in teaching and encouraging others to create and express themselves by working with textiles and paper to make unique items which serve a "practical" use but are also beautiful and expressive of one's personality. In preparation for opening her own business, Linda took courses through SBA's Small Business Development Center and SBA was also able to assist Linda with a 7(a) and LowDoc loan for her business.

By incorporating arts and crafts into the lives of her customers, Linda hopes to enrich the quality of their lives by offering a constructive way to use precious "down" time, to improve self esteem by showing them that anyone can create unique and beautiful items and to improve the quality of family time by providing craft ideas which can unite parent and child in jointly shared hobbies and passions.

Linda and her business's philosophy is that play is a necessity at all ages. Playing keeps us healthy in body, mind & spirit – counterbalancing the stresses of everyday life. It appears that Whoops! and Co. and Paper Impressions is fulfilling this philosophy by offering the products and services that Linda envisioned for her business. SBA is proud to have been a part of Linda's dream of owning her own business.